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SUBJECT: SPANISH GOVERNMENT ARRESTS ARGENTINE ACCUSED DEATH SQUAD LEADER AFTER 22 YEARS

¶1. (U) Spanish police arrested Rodolfo Eduardo Almiron Sena on December 28 after an Argentine judge issued an international warrant accusing Almiron of murder and crimes against humanity that have no statute of limitations. Almiron has been wanted since 1984, accused by Argentine courts of murders committed in the 1970s when Almiron was a police commissioner who led the Argentine Triple A right-wing death squads under the direction of President Isabel Peron's Interior Minister Jose Lopez Rega. Press reports say that Almiron has lived in Spain since 1975 and worked in the early 1980s as a bodyguard to Manuel Fraga, a conservative politician who was a minister under the Franco regime and a leader during Spain's transition to democracy. The Spanish National Court will process Almiron for extradition to Argentina.

¶2. (U) According to Spanish independent daily *El Mundo*, an earlier warrant was delivered to Spain in 1984 during the government of Felipe Gonzalez, but the Spanish government never arrested him because a typographical error substituted the name Luis for Rodolfo. *El Mundo*, whose "re-discovery" of Almiron in December 2006 enabled the Argentine judge to order his arrest, alleges that the Spanish government protected Almiron because he had worked with not only Fraga but also the governing Socialist Party's security forces.

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